

ONLINE APPENDIX

"Explaining Social Policy Preferences: Evidence from the Great Recession

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Survey items used in the analysis

[Welfare policy preferences]: *Do you support an increase in the funding of government programs for helping the poor and the unemployed with education, training, employment, and social services, even if this would raise your taxes?*

(1) Strongly oppose; (2) Somewhat oppose; (3) Neither support nor oppose; (4) Somewhat support; (5) Strongly support

How important should it be for the government to do each of the following things:

[Global Warming] Protect the environment from global warming.

[National Security] Protect its borders from security threats.

[American Values] Protect American values from foreign cultural influences.

(1) Very important; (2) Somewhat important; (3) Neither important nor unimportant (4) Somewhat unimportant (5) Completely unimportant

[Employment Status]: *Are you currently employed?*

Full-time employee; Part time employee; Self-employed; Unemployed; Retired; Student; Homemaker

[Household Income]: variable was coded based on the following question: *Can you give us an estimate of your salary in 2008 before taxes?*

Below \$30,000; \$30,000 - \$40,000; \$40,000 - 50,000; \$50,000 - \$60,000; \$60,000 - \$75,000; \$75,000 - \$90,000; \$90,000 - \$110,000; \$110,000 - \$130,000; \$130,000 - \$150,000; Over \$150,000

Note that the question was asked separately for the respondent's income and for that of their spouse. The top category was capped at \$160,000. The results were converted into U.S. dollar figures, taking the mid-point of each band, and summed up for both self and spouse.

Job Security: *Looking forward to the next three years, how confident do you feel about being able to keep your current job?*

1. Very confident 2. Confident. 3. Slightly confident. 4. Not at all confident

Education: *What is the highest level of education you have completed?*

- Did not graduate from high school
- High school graduate
- Some college, but no degree (yet)
- 2-year college degree
- 4-year college degree
- Postgraduate degree (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, etc.)

Party Identification: *Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a ...?*

Democrat; Republican; Independent; Other; Not sure

Table A 1. Comparison of the American Community Survey Sample (2007) and the Four Survey Samples

	ACS	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4
<u>Age</u>					
18-34 years	30.8%	31.1%	27.8%	21.2%	17.7%
35 to 44 years	19.1	18.7%	20.2%	18.1%	20.1%
45 to 54 years	19.4	19.8%	21.1%	22.5%	24.7%
55 to 64 years	14.5	13.6%	14.8%	19.4%	19.6%
65 and over	16.6	16.8%	16.1%	18.7%	18.0%
<u>Gender (>18)</u>					
Male	48.6%	48.1%	48.1%	48.2%	48.6%
Female	51.4	51.9%	51.9%	51.8%	51.4%
<u>Education (population >25)</u>					
Less than high school diploma	15.5%	9.8%	9.8%	7.3%	5.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	30.1	31.1%	33.4%	33.8%	34.2%
Some college or associate's degree	26.9	29.8%	28.6%	27.8%	27.8%
Bachelor's degree	17.4	18.5%	18.4%	20.0%	19.9%
Graduate or professional degree	10.1	10.8%	9.8%	11.1%	12.6%
<u>Employment</u>					
Employed	60.3%	56.3%	58.2%	56.0%	59.6%
Unemployed	4.1	6.7	10.3	9.4	8.5
Not in labor force	35.2	37.0	31.5	34.6	31.9
<u>Income</u>					
Mean household income (dollars)	69,972	63,443	54,147	54,795	56,556
Male (dollars)	44,255	49,613	43,712	42,742	44,162
Female (dollars)	34,278	30,511	26,226	25,167	26,354

Table A 2. Respondent Characteristics, by Number of Successful Contacts

<i>Variable</i>	Interviews:			
	One	Two	Three	Four
% Female	53.3	46.4	49.4	51.0
% Less Than High-School	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.02
% High School	0.25	0.18	0.26	0.27
% Some College	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.28
% 2-Year College	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.11
% College Degree	0.22	0.26	0.22	0.24
% Post-graduate	0.14	0.23	0.15	0.09
Income (USD, '000)	37.9	40.3	41.8	38.5
% Married	0.56	0.72	0.60	0.49
% Divorced/ Separated	0.14	0.10	0.13	0.16
% Widowed	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.03
% Single	0.19	0.12	0.18	0.28
% Domestic Partnership	0.06	0.03	0.05	0.03
PID (7-point scale)	3.83	3.85	3.93	3.86
<i>Confidence in Keep Job</i>				
Very Confident	0.40	0.38	0.38	0.48
Confident	0.30	0.32	0.29	0.28
Slightly Confident	0.13	0.16	0.17	0.09
Not Confident	0.08	0.06	0.07	0.05
<i>Finding an Equivalent Job</i>				
% Very Easy	0.15	0.10	0.12	0.18
% Somewhat Easy	0.22	0.20	0.20	0.27
% Neither	0.20	0.18	0.19	0.22
% Somewhat Difficult	0.22	0.25	0.24	0.19
% Very Difficult	0.19	0.25	0.22	0.11
Age	50.1	55.5	52.7	50.3
% Full-Time Emp.	0.43	0.41	0.45	0.49
% Part-time Emp.	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.05
% Self-Employed	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.10
% Unemployed	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05
% Retired	0.19	0.27	0.21	0.18
% Student	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.03
% Homemaker	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.09
Total Respondents	3,178	1,603	1,044	402

Table A 3. Numerical counts of employment status changes, by survey wave

	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Total
New Unemployed	43	69	50	162
Lost Job	35	53	39	127
Long-Term Unemployed	15	67	78	160
Job Less Secure	107	107	78	292
Newly Employed	14	35	38	87
Lower Employment Capacity	60	105	84	249

Table A 4. Summary Statistics

Variable	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Welfare	10,401	0.538	0.381	0	1
Previous Welfare	4,870	0.529	0.380	0	1
ProWelfare	10,401	0.496	0.500	0	1
Previous ProWelfare	4,891	0.487	0.500	0	1
Democrat (Wave 1)	29,470	0.477	0.499	0	1
Republican (Wave 1)	29,470	0.401	0.490	0	1
Independent (Wave 1)	29,470	0.123	0.328	0	1
Age	11,935	51.2	14.725	19	98
Female	11,935	0.497	0.500	0	1
Income (log)	11,393	3.120	1.285	0	5.075
Education	11,935	3.742	1.496	1	6
Lost Job	11,456	0.011	0.105	0	1
Drop in HH Income	4,885	0.045	0.208	0	1
Job Less Secure	4,883	0.060	0.237	0	1
Long-Term Unemployed	4,883	0.033	0.178	0	1
Newly Employed	4,883	0.018	0.132	0	1
Not in Labor Force	11,914	0.328	0.469	0	1
Ease of Finding New Job	7065	3.397	1.313	1	5
Job Security	7239	1.98	.959	1	4

Table A 5. Economic shocks and difference in support for welfare spending, by party ID

Party ID (in t=1)	<i>Economic Shock</i>		
	Loss of Job	Income Decline	Job Less Secure
Democrats	4%	-5%	4%
Republicans	19%	7%	8%
Independents	23%	10%	6%
Affected Individuals	(127)	(222)	(292)

Note: Entries denote the unconditional differencing of change in support for expanding welfare spending, comparing the policy preferences of those personally affected and those unaffected by the economic shock. To make the comparison meaningful, in the first two columns the sample is restricted only to individuals that were employed in the previous period.

*Figures in parentheses denote the number of individuals affected by each shock.

**Table A6. Personal Economic Shocks and Change in Support for Welfare Assistance
(ordered probit)**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Lost Job	0.470** (0.126)			0.480** (0.143)	0.483** (0.143)	0.498** (0.145)
Drop in Household Income		-0.000 (0.087)		-0.076 (0.088)	-0.077 (0.088)	-0.099 (0.090)
Job Less Secure			0.167* (0.083)	0.017 (0.093)	0.012 (0.092)	0.033 (0.095)
Spouse Lost Job					0.262+ (0.158)	0.255 (0.166)
Prev. Attitudes on Welfare	2.643** (0.078)	2.624** (0.078)	2.625** (0.078)	2.643** (0.078)	2.644** (0.078)	2.710** (0.081)
Democrats	0.525** (0.053)	0.514** (0.053)	0.515** (0.053)	0.524** (0.053)	0.524** (0.053)	0.526** (0.055)
Republicans	-0.408** (0.051)	-0.420** (0.051)	-0.421** (0.051)	-0.409** (0.051)	-0.408** (0.051)	-0.414** (0.052)
Long-term Unemployed	-0.003 (0.096)	-0.064 (0.096)	-0.040 (0.095)	-0.013 (0.096)	-0.022 (0.097)	-0.043 (0.100)
Newly Re-employed	-0.041 (0.140)	-0.074 (0.140)	-0.055 (0.140)	-0.046 (0.141)	-0.056 (0.141)	-0.070 (0.149)
Not in Labor Market	0.059 (0.069)	-0.023 (0.068)	0.006 (0.067)	0.051 (0.071)	0.050 (0.071)	0.043 (0.072)
Income (log)	0.019 (0.024)	-0.010 (0.024)	-0.004 (0.023)	0.015 (0.025)	0.014 (0.025)	0.004 (0.025)
Education	0.041** (0.012)	0.041** (0.012)	0.042** (0.012)	0.042** (0.012)	0.042** (0.012)	0.043** (0.012)
Age	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)	0.002 (0.002)
Female	0.015 (0.036)	0.002 (0.035)	0.005 (0.036)	0.014 (0.036)	0.012 (0.036)	0.008 (0.037)
County Unemp. Rate						-0.026* (0.010)
Fixed Effects	Wave	Wave	Wave	Wave	Wave	State* Wave
Observations	4584	4619	4619	4584	4584	4508
Pseudo R^2	0.292	0.290	0.290	0.292	0.292	0.305

Note: Entries are coefficients from an ordered probit estimation. Standard errors clustered by respondent are reported in parentheses. All estimations include controls for marital status and an indicator variable denoting whether household income is missing (coefficients not reported).

+ significant at 10%; * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

**Table A7. Comparison of Demographic Characteristics:
Newly Re-Employed Still Unemployed**

Demographic	Newly Re-employed (prev. unemployed)	Still Unemployed
Age 18_34	24.1%	8.1%
Age 35-44	19.5%	19.4%
Age 45-54	32.3%	37.5%
Age 55-64	20.6%	32.5%
Age 65+	2.3%	2.5%
Female	51.7%	52.5%
White	71.3%	75.6%
Black	10.3%	13.1%
Hispanic	11.5%	6.9%
Less than High-School	2.3%	5.0%
High School	25.3%	29.4%
Some College	34.5%	29.4%
College	26.4%	26.9%
Graduate	11.5%	9.4%
Married/Domestic Partnership	43.7%	40.6%
Separated/Divorced	14.9%	18.1%
Single	40.2%	38.1%

Table A8. Testing the Ceiling Effect: Full Sample vs. Sample Excluding Previous "Strong Supporters" of Welfare Expansion

	Full Sample	Excluding Strong Support
Democrat	0.128** (.013)	0.132** (.015)
Republican	-0.100** (.012)	-0.100** (.013)
Lost Job	0.221** (.072)	0.199* (.087)
Lost Job X Democrat	-0.199* (.079)	-0.182+ (.101)
Lost Job X Republican	-0.09 (.089)	-0.068 (.103)
Drop in Income	-0.029 (.049)	-0.072 (.055)
Drop in Income X Democrat	-0.021 (.053)	0.004 (.064)
Drop in Income X Republican	0.077 (.057)	0.126* (.063)
Job Less Secure	-0.04 (.048)	-0.036 (.051)
Job Less Secure X Democrat	0.067 (.055)	0.093 (.064)
Job Less Secure X Republican	0.041 (.057)	0.031 (.061)
Observations	4584	3433

Note: Dependent variable is the first difference in support for welfare expansion, comparing reported attitude in the current and previous wave. Column (2) excludes respondents who "strongly" supported welfare expansion in the previous wave. Standard errors clustered by respondent are reported in parentheses. All estimations include full set of controls (coefficients not reported). + significant at 10%; * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Note on the use of weights: All the analyses reported in the manuscript, which aim to portray the preference of the U.S. public at a given time period, are calculated using sample weights (i.e. Figures 2 and 3). The weights were constructed to make each wave representative of the U.S. population in terms of key demographics. Note that these analyses also include respondents that are not part of the panel, but which were interviewed by YouGov in order to make the sample wave more similar in terms of demographic characteristics to the overall public. In contrast, all analyses that examine change in policy preference at the individual level (i.e. the remaining tables and graphs) are calculated without weights, since one seeks to estimate the effect of a given change in circumstances at the individual level, without claims about of the impact on the U.S. electorate at large. I believe that by presenting the unweighted comparisons, the analysis provides readers a clearer sense of how to interpret the estimated effects, without having to worry that the effects are an artifact of the weighting. Nonetheless, I should add that including the sample weights in the regressions makes the results stronger than those reported in the article, not weaker. To demonstrate the difference from including the weights, in Table A9 I replicate the analysis presented in Table 3 of the manuscript, this time using sampling weights. As one can see, all the estimated effects of interest remain robust as before while the point estimates are slightly larger than in the unweighted specification.

Table A9. Personal Economic Shocks and Support for Welfare Assistance (Weighted)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Lost Job	0.103** (0.036)			0.094** (0.028)	0.094** (0.028)	0.095** (0.028)
Drop in Household Income		0.005 (0.018)		-0.010 (0.018)	-0.010 (0.018)	-0.013 (0.018)
Job Less Secure			0.035* (0.017)	0.005 (0.018)	0.004 (0.018)	0.008 (0.019)
Spouse Lost Job					0.056 (0.034)	0.051 (0.036)
Prev. Attitudes on Welfare	0.597** (0.019)	0.589** (0.014)	0.589** (0.014)	0.592** (0.014)	0.592** (0.014)	0.592** (0.015)
Democrats	0.103** (0.017)	0.126** (0.013)	0.126** (0.013)	0.128** (0.013)	0.128** (0.013)	0.127** (0.013)
Republicans	-0.086** (0.016)	-0.100** (0.012)	-0.100** (0.012)	-0.097** (0.012)	-0.097** (0.012)	-0.096** (0.012)
Long-Term Unemployed	0.006 (0.011)	-0.002 (0.020)	0.002 (0.020)	0.009 (0.020)	0.007 (0.020)	0.002 (0.021)
Newly Re-employed	0.027 (0.028)	-0.019 (0.028)	-0.016 (0.028)	-0.013 (0.028)	-0.016 (0.028)	-0.021 (0.029)
Not in Labor Market	-0.032 (0.038)	-0.007 (0.013)	-0.002 (0.013)	0.008 (0.014)	0.008 (0.014)	0.006 (0.014)
Income (log)	0.015 (0.022)	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.001 (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)	0.001 (0.005)
Education	-0.000 (0.008)	0.006** (0.002)	0.007** (0.002)	0.006** (0.002)	0.006** (0.002)	0.006** (0.002)
Age	0.012** (0.003)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Female	0.000 (0.000)	0.002 (0.007)	0.003 (0.007)	0.004 (0.007)	0.004 (0.007)	0.003 (0.007)
County Unemp. Rate						-0.005* (0.002)
Constant	0.098* (0.048)	0.144** (0.031)	0.138** (0.031)	0.118** (0.031)	0.118** (0.031)	0.520** (0.051)
Fixed Effect	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time*State
Observations	4,584	4,619	4,619	4,584	4,584	4,508
R-squared	0.585	0.580	0.581	0.585	0.585	0.613

Note: Standard errors clustered by respondent. All regressions include controls for respondents' marital status, race, and income (coefficients not reported). + significant at 10%; * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Figure A1. Characteristics of the Job Losers, by Original Party ID

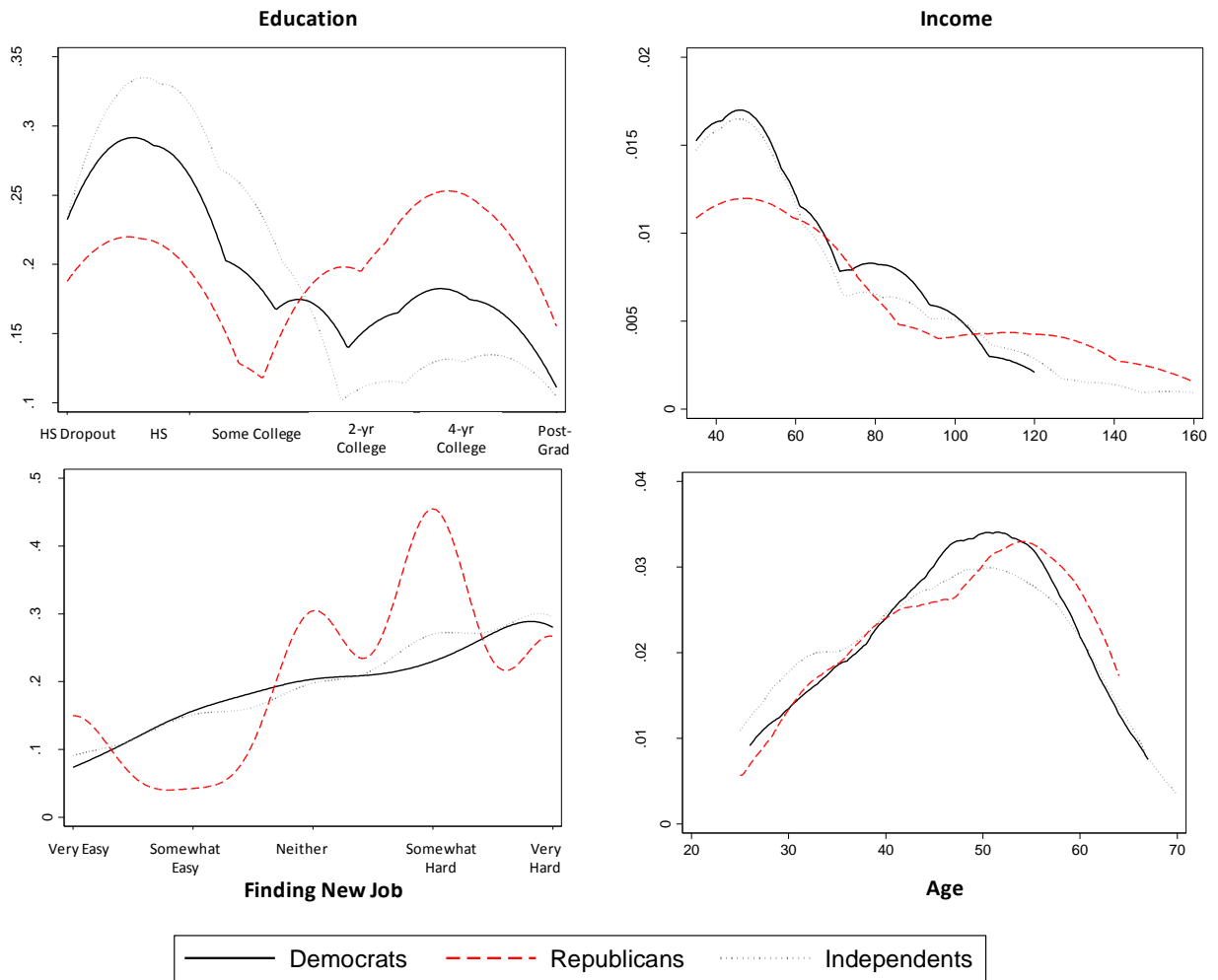
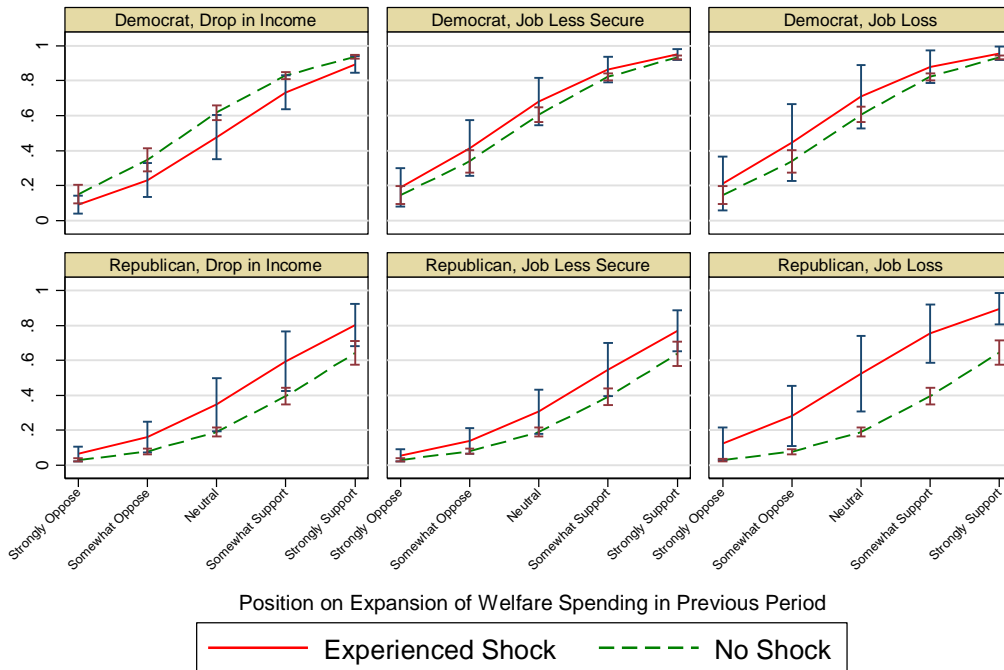


Figure A2. Probability of support for expansion of welfare spending as a function of experiencing an economic shock, by partisan affiliation in the first period.



Graphs by party and shock

This graph presents the same estimates as those presented in Figure 4 of the main paper. This graph also includes the 95% confidence intervals. The graphs in the top row refer to Democrats and the graphs in the bottom row to Republicans. Green lines denote partisans who experienced the shock and red lines partisans who did not.

APPENDIX B

Attitude Change on Welfare Policy-Related Questions: Comparison of YouGov vs. Pew Research Data

A concern one must have with results from any given survey study is the question of external validity. To what extent is the sample used in the study representative of the population whose attitudes it seeks to measure? To help address this question, I compare the responses to the Main Question explored in this article with a question asked as part of the Pew Research's study "Trends in Political Values and Core Attitudes". The question, read over the phone to three different nationally-representative samples in three waves – December 2007; April 2009, and April 2012 , read as follows:

The government should help more needy people even if it means going deeper in debt? Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree?

The Pew Question and the Main Question are not quite the same. Most obviously, the Pew Question does not mention assistance to the unemployed, the trade-off it mentions is higher debt rather than higher taxes, and the time-period it covers is not identical to the panel study I use. Moreover, the Pew Question did not offer a neutral or mid-point response option. Nonetheless, it asks about support for assistance to the needy and also mentions a potential tradeoff, in this case an increase in the national debt which would imply either lower spending in the future, higher taxes, or perhaps both. Thus, it captures some of the same tradeoff between a more expansive social safety net and higher future burden.

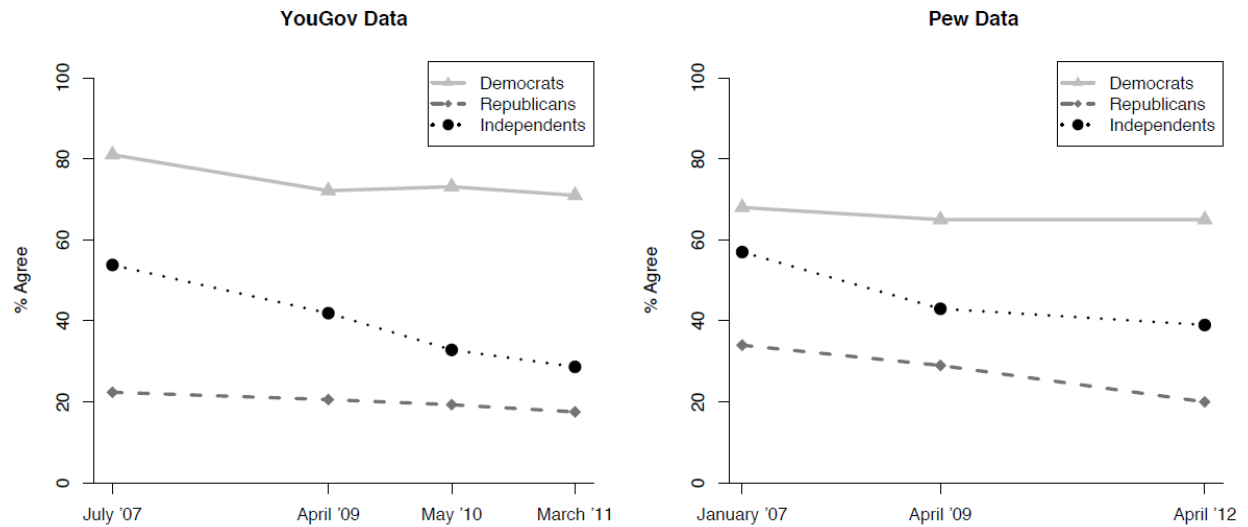
The results obtained in each of the two studies are presented in the figure below. The results of the Pew study are reassuring in that they appear to confirm the main temporal trends observed in the YouGov study analyzed in the article. These include: (i) a large and consistent partisan divide in support for welfare spending over the time period under study; (ii) a general trend of decreasing support for expanded welfare spending among all three partisan groups; (iii) a largest drop in support among Independents; (iv) a drop in support among Democrats immediately following the eruption of the crisis and then a tapering off of the effect. The one difference we do observe between the two studies is the larger drop in support among Republicans that is observed in the Pew Study. It is difficult to tell why this is the case, though perhaps the explicit mention of the debt increase, an issue which was the rallying cry of the Republicans during the

run-up to the 2010 mid-term elections, might explain the greater opposition exhibited by the Republicans to the proposed tradeoff offered in the Pew Study.

YouGov Data: “Do you support an increase in the funding of government programs for helping the poor and the unemployed with education, training, employment, and social services, even if this might raise your taxes?” 1. strongly support; 2. somewhat support; 3. neither support nor oppose; 4. somewhat oppose; 5. strongly oppose.

Pew Data: “The government should help more needy people even if it means going deeper in debt” Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree?

Figure A3. Comparison of Responses to Questions on Social Spending



Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. 2012. *Trends in Political Values and Core Attitudes: 1987-2012*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

APPENDIX C

The experiment was administered as follows: respondents were randomly assigned to receive one of the treatments below. Each treatment was assigned to approximately 170 respondents. The question was added in the beginning of an omnibus survey administered by YouGov/Polimetrix, CA, in June 2012. Following the survey question, respondents were prompted with a set of five response options: 1. strongly support; 2. somewhat support; 3. neither support nor oppose; 4. somewhat oppose; 5. strongly oppose. The versions of the question assigned to each treatment were as follows:

Version I: “Main Question” (The original item used as the dependent variable in the article)

Do you support an increase in the funding of government programs for helping the poor and the unemployed with education, training, employment, and social services, even if this might raise your taxes?

Version II: No Tradeoff

Do you support an increase in the funding of government programs for helping the poor and the unemployed with education, training, employment, and social services?

Version III: Unemployed, Active Labor-Market Programs

Do you support an increase in the funding of government programs for helping the unemployed with education, training, and employment, even if this might raise your taxes?

Version IV: Needy, Social Services

Do you support an increase in the funding of government programs for helping the poor with social services, even if this might raise your taxes?

Table A10. Support for Expanded Welfare Provision, by Experimental Treatment

	All	<i>N</i>	Democrats	<i>N</i>	Republicans	<i>N</i>
Version I: Original	45.0%	(169)	74.3%	(74)	14.3%	(63)
Version II: Original_No Tradeoff	51.8%	(168)	75.6%	(78)	22.6%	(62)
Version III: Unemployed_ALP	46.4%	(168)	71.6%	(74)	17.9%	(67)
Version IV: Needy_Welfare	47.6%	(168)	74.0%	(77)	15.4%	(65)